

THE RELATIONSHIP OF GROUP WORK
TO PASTORAL THEOLOGY

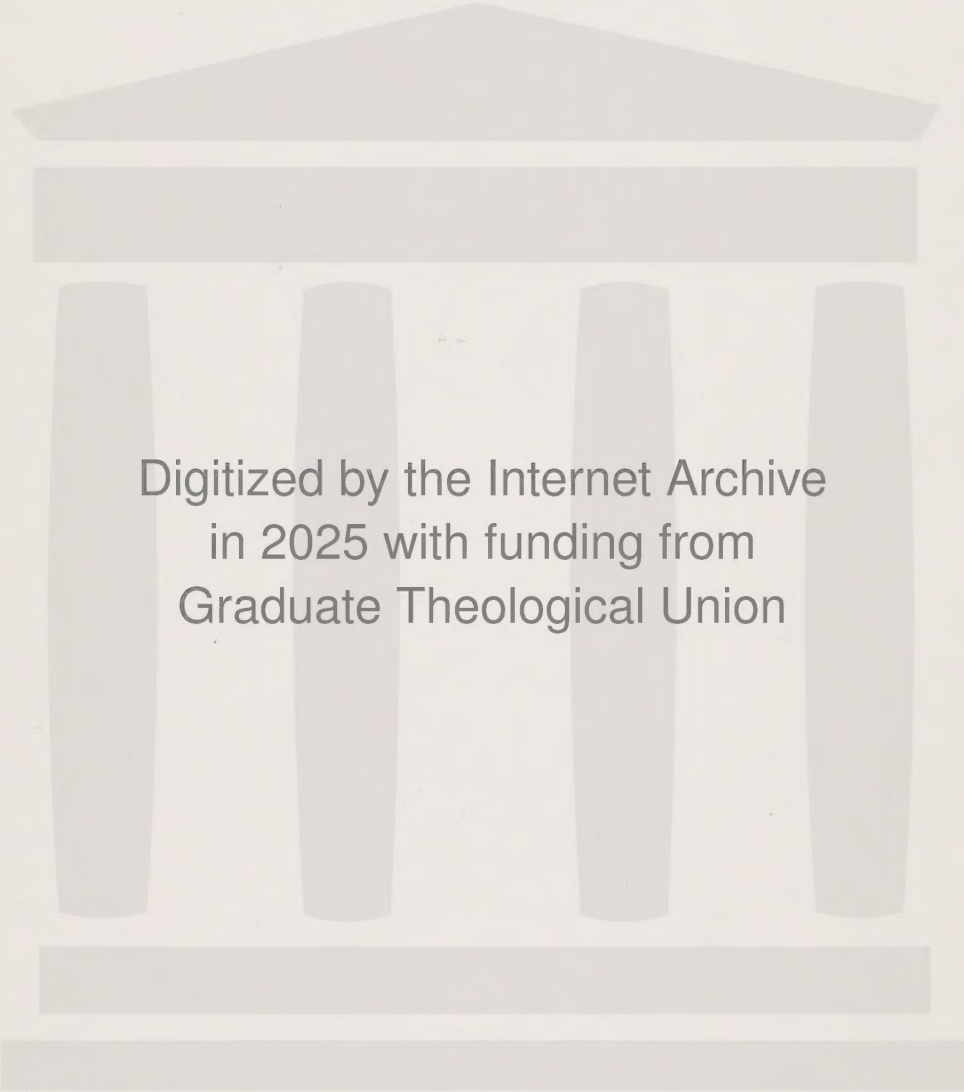
NOBLE L. OWINGS

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THE RELATIONSHIP OF GROUP WORK

TO

PASTORAL THEOLOGY

By

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A THESIS

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THESIS: That the spiritual welfare of the parish-ioner under pastoral care will be enhanced if the pastor, in encouraging his charge to participate in the Christian social activity of the parish, does so against the back-ground of a knowledge of the dynamics of group work.

* * *

PREFACE

PREFACE

As far as I have been able to discern, the field of group work as it bears specifically upon the care of the pastor for his parishioners is one that has not been entered before by a Churchman. Various secular authors include church groups in listings of associations in which group work principles can be successfully applied, but seemingly no one has considered group work as an aspect of pastoral theology. The Rev. Almon R. Pepper, of the Department of Christian Social Relations of the National Council, was able to offer me no aid academically, but I do appreciate his kind words of encouragement to one about to enter a new field.

My interest in the matter at hand was crystallized by the Rev. Dr. Joseph F. Fletcher, dean of the Graduate School of Applied Religion in Cincinnati, Ohio. For some time prior to meeting Dr. Fletcher, I had been musing upon the desirable effects which participation in church groups seemed to have upon individuals. Time and time again I had seen parishioners, and especially those in adolescence, take a new lease upon life after they had once taken active parts in one or more of the usual parish groups. Outstanding in my mind as I write is the case of a woman in an Eastern

parish who had become soured upon the world because of the untimely death of her husband, which left her with the care of two children. The rector suggested that she enter into the life of the parish. She did so, and the transformation was remarkable. He started her on the familiar routine job of teaching a Church school class of third-grade boys. Her interest spread from there. She organized a junior choir, asked to be put on the altar guild, and became one of the most active women of the parish. As she entered more and more enthusiastically into the give and take of the various groups, she quite obviously found life more abundant, and she imparted to others something of the new strength that she had found under the roof of the Church.

Another case is that of an adolescent boy who would not attend the Sunday evening young people's meetings, although he came to the Church services regularly, because "the hour of meeting prevented his listening to a favorite program on the radio." The real reason was his self-consciousness among people his own age, especially among the girls, even though his years were such that he should have outgrown this characteristic of early adolescence. Through the good offices of the rector, he was persuaded to take a minor office in the organization. He came to meetings reluctantly at first, but gradually his interest increased, and at the same time, he plainly found life more healthy spiritually.

With some justification, one might maintain that the two cases above are not unusual, that the group interests were really only expressions of the universal desire to be appreciated, that what appeared to be renewed interest in the Church was only heightened self-realization. My only recourse is to personal experience; my observation of the cases persuaded me that the new outlooks on life were something more than new outlooks on self.

Parallel with this interest in the effect of group work upon unsettled individuals arose in me interest in those who go to the top as group leaders, not because of forcible methods, but because of certain qualities of personality that commend themselves to the group at large. Accompanying this interest was a related one of the techniques used by leaders and advisers in their handling of groups. The more I observed the more was I convinced that group work had something to offer to the field of pastoral care and that the pastor would do well who would equip himself with some of the principles of group work.

Dr. Fletcher suggested the title of this thesis, and he acquainted me with several books in the field of group work. He referred me to Miss Grace Coyle, of Western Reserve University, who responded by sending me exhaustive bibliographies.

Upon my return to Berkeley from Cincinnati, the proposed thesis took definite expression under the guiding eye

of the Very Reverend Henry H. Shires, dean of the Church Divinity School of the Pacific. He appointed as my advisers the Rev. Everett B. Bosshard, of the faculty of the Church Divinity School, and Miss Leila Anderson, who is General Secretary of the Young Women's Christian Association at the University of California. Fr. Bosshard aided in working out the theological implications of group work, and Miss Anderson made invaluable suggestions from the standpoint of the Christian sociologist. Dean Ethel M. Springer, of Saint Margaret's House, Berkeley, helped me to discipline my thinking in the work at hand. To all of these people I am grateful for their assistance; without them indeed, I could not have accomplished this thesis.

Noble L. Owings

Berkeley, April, 1943

CONTENTS

CONTENTS

	Page
PREFACE	1
CHAPTER	
I The Theory and Practise of Group Work ..	1
A. History of group work	1
B. Group work compared to case work ..	5
C. Theory	10
1. Christian	10
2. Secular	17
II Some Points of Relationship between Group Work and the Beliefs and Practises of the Church	31
A. Introduction -- clarification of the thesis	31
B. Interpretation of the phrase, "to enhance the spiritual welfare"	35
C. Group work and Hegelian philosophy.	36
D. Points of contact between principles of group work and the teachings of the Church	42

CHAPTER	Page
III Elements of Parochial Group Work	53
A. Group thinking and maintaining of goals	53
B. The group and its leader	57
C. Counselling through group confer- ence	66
IV Conclusions	67
APPENDIX I CREDO (in part) by Joseph F. Fletcher	71
APPENDIX II Integration of Case Work with Group Work	76
BIBLIOGRAPHY	79

CHAPTER I

The Theory and Practise of Group Work

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The Theory and Practise of Group Work

A. The term, "group work," is one comparatively new in social work. At first, it was "social group work," but common usage has reduced it to the shorter form by which it is now generally known. Group work was first isolated and brought into its own in the nomenclature of social work by Walter M. West in 1929 in his preface to *THE SOCIAL WORKER IN GROUP WORK*.¹ Even as late as 1935, the *SOCIAL WORK YEAR BOOK*, in commenting upon the appearance of this new term in various fields of social work in which the worker dealt with groups instead of separated individuals, noted that its use was restricted to leisure-time field workers and that even they were not too fond of it. When a proposal was introduced to change the National Education-Recreation Council to the "National Group Work Council," it was "almost unanimously disapproved."²

Since these early days, group work has emerged as a significant and unique field in sociology. It is no longer confined to popular usage among leisure-time field workers. It is now seen to be not merely a process of dealing with

¹ Published by the American Association of Social Workers.

² *SOCIAL WORK YEAR BOOK*, p. 458.

people living under abnormal conditions of one kind or another, but it is a method of personal integration. Participation in group activity does something more to the individual than teach him how to get along with other people with whom he has to live. Group work itself is something more than a means of dispatching business. It is an indication of the shift in social and theological thinking away from the salvation of the isolated individual and toward the deliverance of the individual and his society simultaneously. It is part of the whole new educational approach, in which stress is laid upon guiding the individual in living instead of introducing him to a certain amount of academic material. Grace Coyle says the following of group work:

Group work is a part of the educational process by which society aims to produce certain effects in individuals and to preserve and transform its cultural heritage.³

Notice that this statement stresses individual growth and social results -- the objectives of the abovesaid contemporary thinking. In other words, group workers do not set up artificial conditions to see how their charges will react, but they train the individual to work in groups as he becomes aware of their existence in his life. It is almost impossible to conceive of living that does not in some way bring the individual into contact with groups of

³ Coyle, Grace, "Group Work and Social Change," PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF SOCIAL WORK, 1935, p. 393. The "certain effects" are, briefly, consideration for other people, appreciation for social tradition, and respect for orderly procedure. The ramifications of these will appear as the thesis progresses.

some kind or another, but, for the sake of clarity it might be well to mention some groups specifically which consciously utilize the techniques of group work: community centers, school centers, Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations, Young Men's and Young Women's Hebrew Associations, scouting organizations, playground and recreational systems, and, for purposes of this paper, church groups.

Group workers take care not to be enmeshed in the techniques of their own profession, so that they lose sight of the end and aim of the process that they are encouraging. It would be a major calamity for a group leader to organize groups for the purpose of organizing groups. His aim must be to guide the individual in utilization of a method for solving problems of community that will confront him as he grows to adulthood. He is ever becoming a member of a new group, or at least becoming better and better acquainted with a group in which he finds himself. The child has come into the world under the care of the family group. As he grows, he experiences ever-widening social interests. The regular appearance of the delivery boy at his home expands his interest from the family to institutions outside the family. His excited interest in the passing fire engine or the corner policeman introduces him to the community and the benefits that it has in store for him if he can live in it as a socially integrated person. His going to

school opens another new group interest to him, and the subjects taught him in class, reading, writing, spelling, history, the sciences, etc., further expand his interest in the world around him and enable him to appreciate the joy of being able to live and share life with others. He sees himself as part of a larger group, the nation, and then the world, and finally the universe.

Parallel with this development in secular education should have come similar growth in religious affairs. The child's first acquaintance with God is in most cases through his mother, or, ideally, through the whole attitude of his family. As he progresses from class to class in Church school, the normal place for continuation of his religious training when he enters secular school, he learns of his moral obligations to other people outside of his family, to people outside of his town, to people outside of his state and country, and finally to people the world over, and he is brought to feel this ever-expanding connection with an enlarging group because of God's love for man, which he is enabled to manifest by his love for others of his kind.

The individual's acquaintance with groups is part of his normal development. Professional leaders in the field decry the interpretation of group work that classifies it along with other methods, especially case-work, of aiding subnormal or maladjusted people. LeRoy E. Bowman,

Director of Leadership Training, United Parents Association, New York, made this significant statement at a National Conference of Social Work:

At this Conference group work has been bracketed with case work as serving those who seek help, and thus would fall in the category of social service. Group work, on the contrary, is not a service to those who ask for help -- it is the social mechanism perfectly competent people utilize to achieve their own ends. To the extent it is used by social workers to serve groups of under-privileged persons, it is merely an adaptation. This fundamental distinction has been ignored by case-workers and community-chest officials who have failed to express (perhaps understand) the fundamentals of good group-work principles, and have demanded registration in social service exchanges of all persons affected by group work, or have bewailed the fact that conferences have not been held by all group-workers with case-workers to discuss individuals in groups. Co-operation between case-worker and group-worker to the extent that members of any group are dealt with by social workers is of course to be sought, or registration in the exchange of members in such groups as are known in any considerable numbers by social agencies. But not church groups, parents' groups, social groups, recreation groups, youth groups, co-operative, labor, and special-interest groups generally.⁴

B. Having established that group work is part of the normal development of the individual in society, it might be well further to define our position by differentiating group work from the familiar social case work. As intimated above, the case worker is concerned primarily with extraordinary conditions of human beings. Gertrude Wilson puts the distinction succinctly by enlisting the

⁴ PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF SOCIAL WORK, 1935, p. 385.

aid of THE FAMILY, by Gordon Hamilton:

Case work's "great concepts" have been said to involve "love of one's neighbor, sharing another's burdens, and helping people to help themselves." To which we add that group work's concepts include a belief in democracy, personal development through group experience, and social development through group action.⁵

The family of a drunkard father, the family of a chronically ill supporter, the husband and wife who have extraordinary marital difficulties -- all are the concern of the case worker. It is conceivable that these people might be helped by participation in group activity, but that would not be the first step in their adjustment. The case worker would first appear on the scene and then recommend such remedy as he saw fit, which might or might not include entering into group activity.

A second distinction between the two lies in the relationship between workers and clients. The case worker is dealing with individuals. His primary concern is with the social (and invariably economic) adjustment of the man, woman, or child that is in trouble; if he can achieve his purpose without moving his client from his established social habits, so much the better. The relationship is that of client and professional man. The only purpose is to solve the immediate problem; once that is done, the worker moves on to the next case. In more serious cases, the worker makes an intensive study of the total situation

⁵ Wilson, Gertrude, GROUP WORK AND CASE WORK, p. 1.

and applies treatment, but always his concern is primarily with the individual. He is a personal counsellor; the client finds help in the interplay of his personality with that of the professional worker. The group worker is in a different position. His interest and concern is with guiding people into fulness of life by interaction with other human beings. His care is for the social adjustment of the individual, but his aid is mediated through the workings of the group under his supervision rather than transmitted by direct contact. Again we turn to Wilson's book:

Relationship [between case worker and client], as here used, implies one lasting over a period of time with freedom to be as intensive as the needs of the client demand. This is in contrast to the relationship of the group worker and member which, as we have already pointed out, must always be tempered by the needs of all the members and that of the group as a whole. Thus the distinction between the work of case workers and group workers with individuals lies in the quality of the relationship. In the demands of the relationship we see the need for differentiation of services between case workers and group workers. The group worker is not in a position to enter into as intensive a relationship with any one member as is implied in the full meaning of the client-worker relationship for many reasons: first, because his responsibility is primarily to the whole group; second, his group load as well as his membership load makes such a relationship impossible under existing group work organization; third, even if the load were reduced it would be exceedingly difficult to work with members in a group with whom the group worker had established so deep an individual relationship; and, finally, few individuals would be able to use a relationship with a worker to meet their own needs and at the same time face a group situation in which other

members were using the same worker to meet their needs.

Records of group workers and case workers present many illustrations of the validity of these conclusions. Even reading the excerpts from the records of study gives some idea of the need for the group worker to be absorbed in the interaction of all the members of the group. It is true that in most club meetings, there are some periods when the group worker is free to devote time to individuals. But with the confusion and constant interruptions of the demands of each member, no one is able to get the satisfaction he needs in an individual relationship. The group worker may, of course, see an individual on days other than those of club meetings, but on those days his other clubs are in session. The lack of time sets a definite limit to individual work but the competitive group situation is the important controlling factor. Each individual must be able to share the group worker with the other members of his group.

This does not mean, however, that a group worker does no work with individuals -- it simply means that he does not permit a relationship comparable to the client-worker relationship to develop. The members bring their problems to him and he must be in a position to meet their immediate needs. To do this effectively he needs background and experience to conduct an exploratory interview; then, according to the need, he either helps the member at that time or helps the member find someone who can help him, which may or may not mean the withdrawal of the group worker entirely. In this process the group worker may use the facilities of the social service exchange and do some home visiting, but both these are tools of exploration and not of treatment.⁶

A third distinction lies in the responsibility for making decisions. In the case of the group, it makes its own decisions; a particular problem is attacked by the combined intelligence of the group. In the instance of the case worker, he endeavors to establish rapport and to enter intimately into decisions made by the client. There is

⁶ Ibid., pp. 64-65.

achieved a "transference" between the client and the worker, and this transference is exactly what the group worker does not want to build up in his line of work. The group worker, as we shall see further on, does not make decisions for the group under his supervision. If we go back to Miss Coyle's statement (Page 2), we shall be reminded that "group work is part of the educational process," and the educational process that is meant is creative education, or directed guidance, wherein the student works out problems for himself, even though he be under guidance. The group worker is a guide for the individuals in the group under his charge, but the decisions made are arrived at by "cross transference between group members."⁷

Lest this discussion lead one to believe that the group worker has no real concern for the welfare of the individual, let him be assured that both the case worker and the group worker study the individual, but they differ in their approach. They occupy different positions, but their work can be coordinated. It is entirely within the realm of possibility for a worker in one of these fields to send one or more of his charges into the other for treatment of special problems.⁸

⁷ Bowman, LeRoy E., "Dictatorship, Democracy, and Group Work in America," PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF SOCIAL WORK, 1935, p. 383.

⁸ See Appendix II.

C. Having examined the general nature of group work we shall now turn to an examination of the theory underlying it, first from the standpoint of the Christian theologian and then from that of the secular group worker.

1. The individual person is a social individual. He is born into a society of men, and he cannot live unto himself even if in later years he elects to live the life of a hermit. The very fact of his being born makes him social in nature, for he is the product of man and woman. His parents constituted a society, even though they might have lived to themselves on a desert isle. The child in the womb has a social existence; he does not emerge out of thin air as a full-grown man, but he emerges from the protection of his mother. When he does, his conduct is conditioned by the family pattern into which he comes, and even though he enjoys freedom of decision, he is limited in his choices by the play of society upon his thinking. He is born under the shadow of social tradition. The time he eats, the way he parts his hair, the friends with whom he associates, where he goes to school, his interests both vocational and avocational, all are influenced by his social milieu. In theological terms, the individual, no matter who he is, is born under the taint of original sin. He is part of the human race, and he is thus subject to the sin of pride common to mankind. He has freedom of

moral choice, but his choice will be powerfully influenced by his social surroundings. Rauschenbusch points out that one criticism aimed at the "social gospel" was that it relieved man of individual responsibility for his shortcomings. He unloaded his responsibility on something outside of himself:

The emphasis on environment and on the contributory guilt of the community, does offer a chance to unload responsibility, and human nature is quick to seize the chance. But the old theology has had its equivalents for environment. Men unloaded on original sin, on the devil, and on the decrees of God. Adam began soon after the fall to shift the blame. This shiftiness seems to be one of the clearest and most universal effects of original sin.⁹

However expressed, man has felt himself conditioned by something outside himself. The devout and cloistered saint, the rough laborer, the head of a family have all felt themselves to be under the limitation. All men have the same experience, if they think at all seriously about themselves. The very fact of their being unable to abolish war is convincing proof that there is something wrong underlying all human life. No one man can rise so high above his fellow men that he is free from the limitations that lie upon the race. Men simply cannot come to the glory of God on earth. His ways are always higher than our ways and His thoughts more noble than ours. Human effort does not approach godliness; human effort plus the grace of God

⁹ Rauschenbusch, Walter, A THEOLOGY FOR THE SOCIAL GOSPEL, p. 33.

enables man to repent and to increase in likeness to God, but the beatific vision is the goal of life after death and is not to be experienced on earth.

The Kingdom of God is not to come by the effort of men working for it. Scientific progress, improved educational methods, increasing international cordiality (I am thinking of some of the plans for the post-war world instead of existing conditions.) will not make the Kingdom. God created man and appeared in flesh in the Incarnate Christ to redeem him from sin, and God will bring His Kingdom with Christ on the throne when He is ready, and not when man thinks that he is ready for the Second Coming. The orientation of man is in God. Every man is a child of God and is living in sin. No man can assert truthfully that he is better than any other man. All men are members of human society, which is sinful, and no one of them has any justification for saying that what concerns society does not concern him, or vice versa. John Bennett calls a "half-truth" the idea "That individuals can rise above any combination of social circumstances:"

It is often assumed by Christians that social conditions are the neutral framework in which the soul must live out its life and that the framework can never be so bad that it is impossible for the man of faith to find inner peace and abundant life within it. Usually this means that the grace of God can save men regardless of such circumstances . . .

To claim that the transformation of social conditions is not important for the spiritual life is to assume the point of view of the strong and

developed person and to forget that even his strength and development might have been blocked by social conditions, by undernourishment, and narrow environment during the most formative years. Such a claim is usually made from the perspective of relative economic privilege even though it may not be recognized as such. It may be the relative advantage of hard agricultural life as compared with the almost hopeless city poverty. This claim resembles the satisfaction with which the "self-made man" surveys America as a land of equal opportunity. What he forgets is that while there may be equal opportunity for the strong to rise to the top, there is neither equal opportunity for all to become strong nor for those who do not rise to live an abundant life.¹⁰

The Christian has a double task -- to change individuals and to change social institutions. The two processes are not independent of each other, but both must go on at one and the same time. To attempt to change the individual by changing conditions under which he lives and the institutions in which he moves is an insufficient as to ~~work~~ exclusively on individuals and to hope thereby automatically to raise human institutions to a godly level. The Christian doctrine of social salvation must of necessity be expressed in terms of tension, the tension between the treatment of the individual as a child of God and the fulfillment of the social implications of the Christian gospel. Man is of unique worth in creation because he alone is created in the image and likeness of God, but the individual man cannot thus regard himself as too sacred to participate in human institutions designed to further the cause of Christ on earth. Quite true it is

¹⁰ Bennett, John, SOCIAL SALVATION, p. 46.

that the individual living alone can achieve disciplined devotion to God that he finds impossible to attain in the distractions and obligations incident to living in a community, but the question might well be raised: Is the religious recluse making the best use of the life given him? Is he, in his secluded search for conformity to the will of God, overlooking his missionary obligation to win others to the Abundant Life? Could he more closely be in accord with the will of God were he to throw himself into groups of men and meet life with them, both he and they emerging more devoted for the experience?

Even the monastery, usually looked upon as the acme of the devout life, is social in its nature. With few exceptions, those in the cloister live intensely sociable lives. In fact so closely knit are their lives that all who apply for the veil or the hood are not able to endure the life offered, and they have to return to a living where the demand for group harmony is not so insistent.

In the early Church, the communal feeling was strong. The Eucharistic community stood apart from the religions of its day, and because of its seditious character as far as Rome was concerned, it often had to provide for its own members. Yet the collective will was strong enough for the Church not merely to survive but to be so positive a force that its mission spread like wildfire after the re-

straints were lifted in 312 A. D.

The individual who became a Christian found new life in his privilege of standing penitent before the forgiving God, but he found the best expression of his thanksgiving in the Eucharist, which was a communal undertaking. Christ had drawn twelve men around Himself with such skill that they emerged from the experience with a single purpose, even though they were far from being a unified group when they first heard the call to follow the Master.

The social aspects of Christianity must not, though, overshadow the worth of the individual. Worshipping corporately, helping the poor, criticizing industrial relations are all legitimate purposes of the Church, but they tend to swallow the individual in their vastness. The Gospel calls the individual to repentance. Private preparation renders the Eucharist more meaningful than does social intercourse. The Church criticizes industrial relations because of their effect upon individual lives. Christ enunciated eternal principles when he responded to immediate personal needs of individuals who came to Him. He did not attempt to reconstruct the social order around Him. It is only by implication that the social significance of His words reach us. The hope that He offered to men was of an individualized attention manifested toward them by a heavenly Father. In the course of the Ebionite controversy

defenders of the Faith made clear that Christianity is something more than an extension of the nationalistic religion of the Jews. The individual was no longer important simply because he was a member of a nation that had a covenant with God, but he was of unique worth in the eyes of God Himself. God had such concern for human flesh which He had created that He became incarnate in it to redeem man from sin. The redemption reached into the depths of human society, as Our Lord indicated so pungently in His driving the money changers out of the temple. There is strength and truth in the words of Bishop Westcott:

If the Word became flesh, the brotherhood of men is a reality for us.

If the Son of God was crucified, the fall, and with it the redemption, are realities for us.

If the Son of man rose again from the dead, the eternal significance of our short space of labour is a reality for us.¹¹

In another volume, the same author criticizes severely those who regard Christianity as other-worldly:

Perhaps we who are set to teach give occasion to this grievous misconception of the Gospel by our own inconsistencies. We have not the courage of our faith. We are ashamed of Christ in society. The falling away of a friend hardly seems to sadden us. But even if the knowledge is our own condemnation we do know that our message is intensely practical. Our aim is not to construct a theory of life for an imaginary commonwealth, but to enforce their duties on citizens of the Kingdom of God: to create a quiet, sober, resolute, conviction of the sovereign authority of the law of Christ: to call out a clear, calm, humble

¹¹ Westcott, Brooke F., SOCIAL ASPECTS OF CHRISTIANITY, p. 8.

confession of duty: to persuade those who have acknowledged Christ to mediate, silently, courageously, as in the sight of God and man, on life and death, on the meaning, the obligations, the gifts, of the Creed which they hold.¹²

Such we think must be some of the thinking of him who is considering group work from the standpoint of the Christian. Neither the group nor the individual can be emphasized to the exclusion of the other, without doing violence to the Gospel and, as we shall now consider, to the theory of group work.

2. We have started with the statement that man is a social individual, and we have expanded that premise under a religious orientation of life. We have now to consider what group work means, regardless of the auspices under which it appears. Here again our statement is in terms of tension between the individual and the group. Our primary debt in this discussion is to M. P. Follett's book, *THE NEW STATE*, although the same thesis is expounded in S. R. Slavson's writings (*CHARACTER EDUCATION IN A DEMOCRACY* and *CREATIVE GROUP EDUCATION*), Grace Coyle's *STUDIES IN GROUP BEHAVIOR*, Harrison S. Elliott's *THE PROCESS OF GROUP THINKING*, and Joseph C. McCaskill's *THEORY AND PRACTISE OF GROUP WORK*.

The older students of psychology maintained that individuals thought, felt, and made judgments independently

¹² Westcott, Brooke F., *THE INCARNATION AND COMMON LIFE*, p. 127.

of outside influence. Now they have gone to the opposite extreme, to say that individuals are created by reciprocal interplay. The individual emerges as he comes into contact with his fellows and learns what he has to contribute to the life of the group as a whole. While it would be inconsistent with our premise, that the individual has worth in the sight of God, to hold that he emerges only as he comes into contact with society, it is of the essence of the basic contention of this thesis that we consider his psychological development as it emerges under group influence.¹³

The underlying principle is unity by difference.¹⁴ The individual after coming into the world is not long in finding himself intimately bound up in some group. Several courses of action lie open to him. He can refuse to become part of any group (insofar as he can be utterly independent) and thus throw himself continually out of step with the rest of society. He can try to take advantage of every association, so that people do his will, regardless of their feelings. He can enter physically into the life of groups; he can be physically present, but he does not feel any compulsion to contribute to the thought and activity of the group. He might enter vigorously into the life of the group

¹³ Cf. Follett, M. P., THE NEW STATE, p. 19.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 25-43.

as long as the rest of the membership agrees essentially with what he thinks and does, but he will withdraw into himself if he is crossed and will refuse to have anything more to do with the total life of the group, until it happens to be en rapport with him again. The ideal reaction to a manifestly social life is a vigorous participation in all the activities normal to each age group and thus progress in wisdom and stature with the years. The relationship between members of any group should be that of mutuality. No one gives more than the others, and no one tries to take at the expense of the rest, but each gives and takes in the common life.¹⁵

The participant in a group should find his efforts incorporated into the total program of the group but not submerged in it. His feeling should not be that of inferiority because of his belonging to an organization too impersonal to take account of his efforts, but he should know that he has made significant contributions to the work at hand. In the terms of the Rev. Dr. Joseph F. Fletcher in his CREDO on democracy, the individual is an "associate" but never an "agglomerate" or an "isolate:"

Every science of human nature reveals that man is naturally an associate rather than an isolate.

¹⁵ Slavson, S. R., CREATIVE GROUP EDUCATION, pp. 1-23, 76-88, and 154-161. Cf. Slavson, S. R., CHARACTER EDUCATION IN A DEMOCRACY, pp. 52-72, and McCaskill, Joseph C., THEORY AND PRACTICE OF GROUP WORK, pp. 10-18.

Hence the falsehood at the heart of individualism from the start. Nevertheless, the social order of the future, the collectivist society, will have to accredit the individual personality as a value in itself. Every man must have his INTEGRITY, so that he is integrated with his fellow members in an organic society but never swallowed up in it. Man is an associate, not an isolate. But also, man shall be a true associate, not an agglomerate! He shall be an integral part of his society, but society shall respect his integrity. Denial of his integrity is the demonic pretension, the lie behind all totalitarian collectivism.

. . . Inter-dependence is so settled a condition now that there can be no security of social rights for any if they do not exist for all. When St. Paul said "We are members one of another" he was expressing a pious ideal. It's a fact now which many of his fellow-confessors hate like poison. The Founding Fathers were little more than rhetorical with their slogan "United we stand, divided we fall." But the sociologist in our day uses it to describe the actual scene!¹⁶

Essentially the same thought is contained in Follett's book:

Let us imagine that you, I, A, B, and C are in conference. Now what from our observation of groups will take place? Will you say something, and then I add a little something, and then A, and B, and C, until we have together built up, brick-wise, an idea, constructed some plan of action? Never. A has one idea, B another, C's idea is something different from either, and so on, but we cannot add all these ideas to find the group idea. They will not add any more than apples and chairs will add. But we gradually find that our problem can be solved, not indeed by mechanical aggregation, but by the subtle process of the intermingling of all the different ideas of the group. A says something. Thereupon a thought arises in B's mind. Is it B's idea or A's? Neither. It is a mingling of the two. We find that A's idea, after having been presented to B and returned to A, has become slightly, or largely different from what it was originally. In like

¹⁶ Fletcher, Joseph F., CREDO, pp. 3,4. See Appendix I, p. 75.

manner it is affected by C and so on. But in the same way B's idea has been affected by all the others, and not only does A's idea feel the modifying influence of each of the others, but A's ideas are affected by B's relation to all the others, and A's plus B's are affected by all the others individually and collectively, and so on and on until the common idea springs into being.¹⁷

This conception of the thought process of the group puts the supreme emphasis on the worth of the individual. It excludes altruism, which is largely an extension of individualism. No matter how keenly the altruist might feel that he is doing his duty to mankind, he is really only projecting himself on his fellow men. He decides what the nature of the bettered conditions will be. He decides where his goodness will be shown. Those who are to be the recipients of his goodness have nothing to say about what they will receive. Whatever is done for them is not theirs; it is their benefactor's, subtly imposed on them. He cannot be refused, for he is either acting in good conscience even though in ignorance (usually the case) or because he has some hold over the donees which prevents their making any criticism, destructive or constructive. We have in mind the employer who will, without consulting his employees' wishes, have game rooms built in the place of employment, provide lectures, bring art exhibits for the edification of all, and other such well-intentioned but ill-founded attempts to manifest good will.

¹⁷ Follett, M. P., op. cit., p. 24.

What is done is commendable, but it has not arisen from the expressed wishes of those who receive its benefits. The implication is that they do not know what they want and that they must be provided for to their best interests. The program, or activity, brought to them is not theirs, no matter how edifying it is. The only person seriously considered is the benefactor himself; the idea is his, and he has carried it out to his satisfaction.

In any expression of concern for another, he who initiates the thought or action is not really in sympathy with the other party unless he experiences the same thoughts that he has. I give a one-year-old child a football, out of the goodness of my heart. The gift, though springing from a good motive, does not especially bring joy to the child, because he is too young to appreciate it. How much more considerate it would have been had I first learned what a one-year-old child likes in the way of a toy and then made by gift consonant with his wishes. My altruistic attitude has reduced the receiver to a mirror for my own ideas.

A second criticism of the altruist is his condescending air. He is helping others less fortunate than he. His giving is a diversion like visiting a strange country. He does not really want to know those whom he helps as though they were his brothers; his chief interest, arising from any number of motives, is to perform a duty to society with-

out becoming personally involved. It is certain that love for neighbor expressed in altruistic fashion would never make any inroads upon sinful society.¹⁸

Group psychology should be distinguished from the psychology of the crowd. (1) The crowd has no collective consciousness. There is not the deliberate sitting down for discussion before acting, so that each member can express himself. There is no conscious attempt to bring one member of the crowd into intellectual harmony with the others. The crowd makes no examination of itself. It acts upon impulse. As soon as a member of the crowd stops to reflect upon the course of action in which he is participating, he ceases thereby to ~~be~~ a member of the crowd, for it has gone on and left him to his thinking. (2) The crowd has no concern for the individual personality. The crowd is trying to achieve only that which appeals to it for the moment, and it cannot be hampered by individual feelings and thoughts. The individual is but a small part of a big machine. No one cares about him as a human being. He can be an essentially moral man helping in the execution of an immoral deed; he can be an immoral man bent upon carrying out a moral deed. He can be a subscriber to any set of creeds or a follower of any prophet. The personality is completely submerged in the crowd. The crowd demands

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 79-84. Cf. Vlastos, Gregory, "What is Love?" CHRISTENDOM, Vol. I, pp. 120 ff.

uniformity; the group must have unity. (3) The general intelligence of the crowd is low. The crowd does not act on intellectual grounds. It acts upon expediency or impulse, and the only person who does any deliberation is the leader, but even this bit of intellectual activity is absent if the crowd is organized on the spur of the moment. (4) The crowd is open to suggestion, good, bad, or indifferent. A crowd has gathered to do a certain act in a certain way. It starts off, but shortly some vociferous person shouts, "No! do it this way." The crowd obediently turns into the new avenue, to follow it until another suggestion is made that sets well at the moment. There is no formal organization; anyone can make a suggestion at any time, and can count with some assuredness upon its being accepted at the moment. (5) There is no individual responsibility attached to joining a crowd. Anyone can attach himself to a crowd as it moves along and then immediately separate himself with impunity once the purpose of the crowd is executed. He joined only for the thrill of participation. He had nothing to lose and nothing to gain, except satisfaction of primitive lusts.

We may sum up the psychological character of the unorganized or simple crowd by saying that it is excessively emotional, impulsive, violent, fickle, inconsistent, irresolute and extreme in action, displaying only the coarser emotions and the less refined sentiments; extremely suggestible, careless in deliberation, hasty in judgment, incapable of

any but the simpler and imperfect forms of reasoning; easily swayed and led, lacking in self-consciousness, devoid of self-respect and of sense of responsibility, and apt to be carried away by the consciousness of its own force, so that it tends to produce all the manifestations we have learnt to expect of any irresolute and absolute power. Hence its character is that of an unruly child or an untutored passionate savage in a strange situation, rather than like that of its average member; and in the worst cases it is like that of a wild beast, rather than like that of human beings.¹⁹

The group has quite different characteristics. Instead of bringing out the worst in men, it tends to bring out the best. There are, to be sure, groups and groups, but our discussion assumes a normative group that is dedicated to a commendable purpose. (1) The group has continuity of existence unknown to the crowd. With the crowd, it is a case of the strongest man rising to the occasion and leading the rest of the pack as suits his impulse of the moment. There is no differentiation of offices whereby the crowd can execute its business with dispatch. Each man does as he pleases, so long as he does not get in the way of another. The events surrounding the French Revolution have been suggested by McDougall as typical of the activities of a crowd. A prominent man one day was a dead man the next. Leaders rose and fell with amazing rapidity. Official positions were shifted according to the whim of the moment, and no attempt was made to keep the

¹⁹ For the discussion and this quoted passage see McDougall, William, *THE GROUP MIND*, pp. 57-64.

governmental groups in continuous existence. The group, on the other hand, makes some attempt to keep its organization running continually in the same general pattern. The same individuals may be allowed to hold office indefinitely, or the same offices will be maintained but will be filled by different persons according to a program of selection (election, appointment, etc.). The first type, that of continuous holding by the same individuals, is characteristic of the inter-communicating group, whose members must of necessity be thoroughly versed in their duties and thus will usually be those who are capable of filling the post as long as possible. The second type, that of changing personnel, is characteristic of the ordinary social club -- "Y" group, garden club -- and of the representative governmental organization, which are not so much concerned with specialization as they are with feeling the pulse of constituents at a given moment or of stimulating interest by changing personnel.

(2) In the group, each individual appreciates the nature, functions, and capacities of the whole to which he belongs. We have said that a person might join a crowd simply to satisfy certain primitive lusts. He who is in a group, though, is called upon to give the best that is in him, intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. He realizes the importance of each member to the group; he is ready to respect the rights of all members and to let

each express himself when he has something to offer. The sustenance of the group is in the give and take of the members. One person cannot make a group, and an association of individuals cannot make a group. The sociological group depends for its life upon the mutual interrelation of its members. As we shall consider later, not even the adviser to a group violates the self-consciousness of his group by directly imposing his will upon it.

We have mentioned the supra-natural elements in the consciousness of the group, i.e., emotional and spiritual overtones. The group's attention is fastened upon one goal; it is improving international relations, training children to be better citizens, instilling the practicality of Christian living, etc. The assent of the members to the group goal is not long in becoming more than an intellectual acceptance, if it ever does exist purely in this form. Emotional overtones color the loyalty of the group to its goal. The totality of the personality is involved. The whole individual begins to move toward the goal. Each member is fired with the aim for which he is working with other like-dedicated people. The self-consciousness of the group begins to manifest itself, not only in the vigorous intellectual activity in group mutuality but also in an intense loyalty that cannot be explained on natural grounds.

(3) While not absolutely indispensable to the development of the collective mind, the presence of a similar group animated by different ideals and traditions is stimulating. Group interaction sharpens the issues and loyalties in each group and thus keeps them continually in a progressive attitude (Unfortunately, this competition can also promote group conflicts, such as war.). Nothing is more fatal to a group than for it to become too well satisfied with what it has achieved. The group mind is a creative mind; it is continually building on the bases of past experience, hard thinking, and profound loyalty.

(4) The group is further characterized by its having a body of traditions, habits, and customs built into the minds of the members and determining their relations one to another. The crowd rises and falls in short order, and very few of its members know each other. The business before the crowd is quickly dispatched, and then the association disbands, never to congregate again in the same way. The operation of a group is slow. The opinions of all the members have to be taken into account. The group is not swept along on an emotional tide to follow the path of least resistance, but it thinks, it builds its own track, it knows its own mind. In this slow, democratic, group process, customs are generated. One member is peculiarly slow of speech; it becomes customary to let him "speak his

piece." The crowd would immediately sweep him away, dazzled by brilliant oratory, but he becomes a tradition in the group. His thoughts are good; so he is listened to with care. A family group has its own private jokes that are not humorous anywhere but in that family. A body of tradition is built up in any association working on group principles, and this is a significant factor in determining how a group will attack a specific problem.

(5) The fifth characteristic of the group is specialization. Each member of the organization has a specific function, determined by his capacities and desires and also by the traditions of the organization. It must not be thought that members are assigned duties mechanically, although some group organization is determined by external authority, but our normative group will fall of its own accord into a pattern of procedure. The crowd, on the other hand, is a conglomeration of people who are loosely knit together for a moment, without anyone's having assigned duties. Everyone does what seems to him the most efficacious in the heat of action. Men, women, and children become impersonalized waves in an ocean of humanity. The group, let it be borne in mind, produces unity among its constituents, but it does not demand uniformity; the individual is never lost in the group, as he is in the crowd. His integrity is respected, and his abilities are given free

play. He is wanted for what he has to contribute to the welfare of the whole. Coyle's defining group work as an educational process gives some clue to the worth of each individual; he is a teacher as well as a learner. He gives and takes in the group process.²⁰

²⁰ Ibid., esp. pp. 31-122. Cf. Follett, op. cit., pp. 85-92.

CHAPTER II

Some Points of Relationship between Group Work and the Beliefs and Practises of the Church

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Some Points of Relationship between Group Work and the Beliefs and Practises of the Church

A. The purpose of this thesis is to show where group work has possibilities of enhancing the spiritual welfare of the individual parishioner who is introduced to it under competent guidance. We are not trying to absolutize the "social gospel." We are not saying that man can only be saved as he is saved in a group. To say that would be to state what Bennett calls a "half-truth," i.e., That you can change society without changing individuals:"

The most that we can expect from a changed system is that it may give the better elements in human nature a greater chance to assert themselves, offer egoistic impulses less destructive temptations, channel the conflicts of groups in ways which do not have collective suicide at the end of them and rid the economic order of the inner contradictions which turn productive power into poverty. There will always be room enough for those who can do their best work in changing systems and for those who can do their best work in changing persons. If only they would get out of each other's way! ¹

A word from H. Shelton Smith further clarifies our

¹ Bennett, John, op. cit., p. 61.

position:

Any such view [that contact with God can be made only through social relations] involves distinct peril for Christian faith, and consequently peril for Christian nurture. To be sure, one's contact with God is stimulated and enriched by social community. But if any one should assume that there can be no sort of contact with God except through other persons, then he assumes something which involves an infinite regress of relations which either denies or obscures the reality of God. Any such view, furthermore, involves a denial that man may experience contact with God in and through the processes of the world of nature. It involves also a denial of God as transcendent of human creatures.²

Our contention is simply that in the comparatively new field of group work as it is known in the social sciences, there are certain attitudes which can aid the individual in appreciating the values of participating in the activities of the Church. The rector does not advise or suggest that his parishioners take part in parish organizations merely to provide them with entertainment or to get the administrative work of the church done. His primary purpose is to attract people to the corporate life of the Church, whose purpose is to worship God. He has any of several means at his disposal for accomplishing his object. He can rely on authority, for example, persuading his parishioners that they have a duty to come to church regularly because the Church requires it. He can rely upon personal power and bring people into the worship of

² Smith, H. Shelton, FAITH AND NURTURE, p. 47.

the Church through the appeal of his own personality. He can work through the Church school, training children in churchmanship, so that they will be loyal to the worship of the Church even before they are adults. He can even induce people to come to the services of the Church by showing them what they can get out of ~~them~~^{it}. He can suggest that parishioners enter into the Christian social life of the parish, and he will effect this by suggesting to them to be active in parish groups. Any one of these methods is used to enhance the spiritual welfare of the individual. Some appeal to him as an isolated individual; others appeal to him as an individual consciously having fellowship with his fellow Christians. In any case, the end in view is to bring the parishioner closer to the Church's worship of God. The person is of supreme worth, even though he is in a social situation.

The now Archbishop Temple, in criticizing certain trends of European thought, had this to say of Maritain:

Maritain justly censures the individualism of much Renaissance thought, and especially of modern democratic thought; he asks for a democracy of the person instead of a democracy of the individual, taking human beings in the relationships of their social contexts rather than as atoms whose significance is chiefly that they may be counted. I think there is much wisdom in this; and it represents a return to St. Thomas from Rousseau.³

Temple's concern with "human beings in the rela-

³ MALVERN, 1941 (The Proceedings of the Archbishop of York's Conference), p. 14.

tionships of their social contexts" is a feeling akin to that of the group worker, although expressed in different terms. The person is something more than an atom to be counted; he is a rational being living in a society of rational beings. Whatever social relations he finds himself in, he is bound to express himself or to feel discontented. The paradox is plain; he must express himself, but he must get along with other people who must also express themselves.

If the pastor advises his charges to come into the social activity of the parish, he does so in order to enhance the latter's allegiance to God, i.e., to enhance his spiritual welfare in the broadest sense, but the church groups are not free from the paradox that we have just expressed. If the person coming into the sphere of the parish finds himself completely immersed in a sea of activity that is heartless toward him, he will find himself in no better position spiritually than he was before he received the advice of his pastor. This paper attempts to show that the principles of social group work have relevance to pastoral care, to the extent that they can aid in bringing the individual parishioner into some of the beliefs and practises of the Church. The first part of the thesis has been given over to a discussion of the theory and practise of group work; this second part will discuss some of the points of contact between group work

and the Church's beliefs and practises; part three will outline some techniques for the pastor to use in applying group work principles to a parish situation.

B. It will clarify the phrase, "to enhance the spiritual welfare," if we indicate categorically what we have in mind. "To enhance the spiritual welfare of the parishioner" will be construed in this thesis to mean:

1. To develop the parishioner's appreciation for the corporate worship of the Church. Corporate worship gives the worshipper devotional heights that he normally does not reach alone and for this reason can go far toward making God a significant force in his life.

2. To aid the parishioner in acquiring respect for other men, creatures of God, who are part of his life.

3. To further his commitment to the Church and its organizations and his appreciation of the Church as a corporate body. So often the Churchman allows his interest to be controlled by the rector incumbent. If he likes the rector, he comes to church; if he does not, he stays away. Just as often, too, the parishioner allows his interest in the Church to be confined to the parish. If he could develop an appreciation of the total organization of the Church and its many institutions by himself developing an appreciation of the worth of group work, he would be more profoundly committed to the Church as a corporate body which needs him as one of its members.

4. To advance his ability to take responsibility in the work of the parish. A single layman frequently is reluctant to take responsible charge of parish organizations, especially those that require missionary enterprise. A proper appreciation of the place of group work in this sphere would give him impetus to take over responsible positions. Group activity is encouraging, too, to those who are not usually afraid to commit themselves to significant parish work.

5. To aid the parishioner to arrive at life objectives as they are determined by group decisions. Life purposes arrived at by a group in which the interested person participates will be more appealing to him than those simply accepted on the say-so of the rector. In looking to a group to determine these objectives, the individual obviates the dangers in arriving at a decision by himself that will be colored by his own limited experience and knowledge.

6. To teach the parishioner to evaluate parish life in terms of what it has to contribute to abundance of living rather than in terms of statistics. By participating in parish groups, the individual will sense that there is something more to parish life than simply keeping up attendance in the organizations.

C. In an able introduction to Follett's *THE NEW STATE*, Viscount Haldane points out that the philosophy underlying

group work is Hegelian:

I have referred to Hegel's teaching only because Miss Follett refers to it in much the same sense. His task was simply to take the facts as he found them and to discover what was their meaning. As the result he held that human institutions belonged to the region, not of inert externality, but of mind and purpose, and were, therefore, dynamic and self-developing. Miss Follett's principle is not different.⁴

We hasten to state that we do not subscribe to this philosophy as all-inclusive of that which should underly the group in the Church. Hegelian philosophy cannot be a complete Christian philosophy. Its emphasis upon the reality of the rational -- "What is rational is real, and what is real is rational" -- lays too much stress upon the intellect. God, the Absolute, is known by the developing mind of man in a continuous, dynamic process. Thesis, antithesis, synthesis is repeated over and over, each time on a higher level of thinking. The process results eventually in a plurality of concepts, which are unified only in the Absolute itself. The essential intellectualism of this philosophy, as well as its evident pantheistic tendencies, make it ineligible for serious use by the Christian.

Group work, it must be admitted, has the danger of falling into purely rational approaches to living. It requires thinking. It has been pointed out that the group

⁴ Introduction, pp. vii ff.

demands full participation of its members, to the limit of their abilities. Each one in the group will find his thinking pitted against that of his fellows, and he will be conscious of struggle. Even if the group is one organized only for recreational purposes, the members must think, and think quickly, to keep up with the pace that the group sets. There will, in a sense, be progress by thought alone, for what is done in one instance will be under examination by the same group that effected it, or by other personnel occupying the same positions, followed by refined processes based on the old. In a sense, the mind is enabling the individual to realize himself. It is enabling him to work out, dynamically, a way of living. THE NEW STATE, to which we have referred, and Slavson's CREATIVE GROUP EDUCATION, in their titles suggest a self-realizing system of approaching life.

The spiral is ever upward as the group advances toward that perfection which it can never achieve. There is no end. The process is continuous, and it is self-perpetuating. A group decision expresses the common will at a particular moment, but there is no assurance that it will not be changed materially at the next moment, and, indeed, change is of the essence of group theory. New concepts are evolved as the old ones are proved to be inadequate.

There are dangers. There is no absolute morality. Everything is relative. What is truth one moment might be

false the next. There are no absolute standards, for all life is creative. It realizes its own limitations as soon as it evolves an idea, and thus it inspires itself to go on to something better (or at least new), which itself soon will give way to a third level. Group workers thus envision democracy. It is not a system of government made up of the representatives of the people; it is not people meeting in formal assembly to pass the laws of the land. Democracy is a dynamic way of life. It is a striving for realized truth.

Democracy, in essence, is not a system of government or of social organization; it is a set of dynamic principles. They might be incorporated in a Republican society or a Soviet society, or even in a limited monarchy if the king were a servant of the people and not arbiter. I say "any form" of social order because the validity of democratic principles does not depend upon any given social structure, although the variety of possible forms is limited at least to the exclusion of social orders which are by nature a contradiction of the principles of people's rule (like autocracy, oligarchy, plutocracy).⁵

There is no doubt but that the stress is upon the intellect. The individual personality has supreme freedom to think as he pleases, for he who believes in this conception of the nature of democratic society believes firmly in the ultimate triumph of truth. The group worker is not

⁵ Fletcher, op. cit., p. 2. I quote Fletcher's CREDO again, not because its author is noteworthy for his labors in the field of group work but because he here expresses the group worker's philosophy and goes on to relate it to the Christian idea of man.

interested primarily in God; his job is in the field of sociology, not in theology. But the use of man's intellect to arrive at truth is not too far removed from the use of man's intellect to know God by the exercise of his reason. We have seen that Temple praises a disciple of neo-Thomism because he sees in man something besides an atom to be counted, yet at the same time keeping before man an appreciation of the "hideous power of sin."⁶ Reason is not by any means to be ruled out of man's relationship to God. Criticism arises only when reason is made supreme, and man is believed to be capable of realizing himself apart from God. I see no reason why the Christian sociologist interested primarily in group work could not in good conscience advise that participation in parish groups (or at least groups under Christian leadership) can lead to an appreciation for the beliefs of the Church. Thought under judgment is certainly Christian.

Lest we seem to overlook other aspects of the group process, let us be reminded of one of the characteristics of groups which we have discussed above, i. e., the group is characterized by having a body of traditions, habits, and customs built into the minds of the members and determining their relations one to another. Traditions, habits, and customs are not built up by intellectual activity alone. There are emotional overtones in the process that cannot be

⁶ MALVERN, 1941, p. 14.

ruled out of human relationships. Two groups having exactly the same purpose will build up different customs, which cannot be accounted for entirely by different patterns of thinking. Emotion plays its part in every group. Group work calls for free expression of the whole person. It aims at unity, not uniformity. If the individual is to be himself, he will bring something besides his intellect to bear upon the life of the group. Each of the other members will do the same thing. The whole picture will be colored by emotional factors that determine in part the resulting practises of the group.

In addition to emotions, the group members will bring and contribute tenets of belief, which will also go toward making up the traditions of the organization. The Christian, ideally, will bring with him a firm belief in the sovereignty of God and in the universality of sin. These conceptions certainly cannot be explained entirely on intellectual grounds, yet they will color the life of the group. Anyone who seeks the council of a pastor will in all probability believe in God before he comes for help. His belief might not be the most sophisticated, but it will be present. The pastor can safely recommend to him sharing in a group in the parish, without fear of his deserting his beliefs for the intellectual play of the group, for it already is made up of others who believe, and their beliefs have given the group a Christian orientation.

Christians do not live by intellect alone, and entrance into group work is not going to change them fundamentally. Their super-rational faith will temper the rationalistic tendencies of the group activity.

D. In looking for relationship between principles of group work and Christian belief, we turn to the Christian doctrine of man. Summary statements which bear upon our investigation appear in two articles in the Oxford Conference book, THE CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDING OF MAN. We quote first from the article written by Emil Brunner:

Human existence in love cannot be expressed in a concrete way toward God himself. To love -- in the sense of agape and not of eros -- means to love only "as God loves." God does not love that which is precious to him; he does not love in the sense of eros, that is, as searching for or finding value, but his love consists in giving value. His loving does not consist in an attraction to something valuable, but it consists in giving himself away. God does not love the "rich," but the "poor." His love is the very opposite of craving. But the man who is living in the love of God cannot love God like this. He cannot give anything to God. Therefore God gives him his fellow man as the recipient of this love. "Love me, in giving thy love to this thy fellow man. Love him in my stead, out of love to me!" Man's love of God must therefore find concrete expression in the love of his neighbor. This is not stated as a command; it is the very essence of love to go "downward," not "upward." The twofold commandment of the love of God and the love of man expresses the original law of human existence. This means that the original being of man, from the very outset, and not merely afterwards, is related to the Thou. The nature of man is not, as Greek individualism regards it, first of all a natura rationalis, and then possibly this anima rationalis may also come into contact with others of the same kind; but the original nature

of man is "actual," like that of lightning which extends from one pole to the other. Just as God's being is actus absolutus, so the being of man is actus relativus, on the basis of the divine actus absolutus; it is responsive actuality. The substance of human existence is responsible love. This responsive actuality is only possible by means of the fact that man has a spirit; spiritual existence is only possible by means of the fact that mind exists; the mind only exists upon a biological basis. Thus personal existence in responsibility is based upon something else; it has a substratum. But we cannot understand the substratum from the point of view of personal existence, for only from the point of view of the person do we understand man as a whole. Where we say "person" the Bible says "heart," and by that it means the personal totality in its essential relation to God and to the neighbor.

. . . man is a sinner, that is, that his actual existence is diametrically opposed to his origin. Here too we are concerned with human existence as a personal whole. Man does not merely "commit" sins, and he does not merely "have" sins, he is a sinner. His opposition to his original creation does not merely affect "something in him" but himself.⁷

In the same book, both Brunner and Walter Marshall Horton comment upon the same problem that confronts the group worker -- the relationship of the individual and the community.

. . . our understanding of ourselves and of our destiny breaks up into individualism and collectivism. This contrast is one which runs through the whole history of humanity and is never settled; for man, having lost his center, can only fly from one extreme to the other. . . . Individualism emphasizes the independence of the self; collectivism stresses the bond with the community, but both do this in such a way that each destroys the other. In the Word of God, however, man is wholly a person; thus he is independent. "If the Son makes you free, then are ye free indeed." . . . But the same call of God (klesis) which makes me free, binds me at the same time to others: the

ekklesia. The ekklesia is not merely a community of worship, it is a perfect community of life, . . . The same love which sets me free makes me a social being. Thus we perceive that a really independent and a really social existence are actually one and the same, namely, existence in love.⁸

Horton says:

[The] general position, that the individual needs society for his own fulfillment, but thrives best in a society which does not swallow him up in the mass, is entirely confirmed by modern observation . . .

Christianity has always had to combat the extremes of individualism and collectivism, in the interests of its own characteristic conception of the Church as a body with many members, a community of free individuals.⁹

Having thus reviewed in the words of modern thinkers the characteristic Christian conceptions of man as loving his neighbor because God loves him, as a sinner, and as being free in Christ but bound at the same time to live a sociable existence, we venture to advance some points of contact between group work and these beliefs of the Church.

1. The essence of the Christian life is love. That is the tie that binds Christians to their God and to each other. The relationship of man to man and man to God has been diagrammed as a triangle, with men at the base angles and God at the apex. Man loves man because of the love of God flowing to him from above, and he in turn manifests his love for God by his loving men. "If a man say, I

⁸ Brunner's article, p. 167.

⁹ P. 231.

love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar . . ."

Add to this the sacredness of human personality in the eyes of God, and we have two elements of Christian belief that very definitely can be given application in the life of the group. If each personality is sacred, i.e., that it is free to develop in Christ because of the unbinding love in which it has its being, any system that preserves this truth has at least one point of contact with Christian belief. We have said that the group demands unity but not uniformity, which is another way of saying that it preserves inviolate the personalities that are its membership. The tie that binds the group is singleness of purpose and singleness of power (grace). The group is not complete unless each member is contributing to whatever it is undertaking. Each member is respected because of what he has to give. And so it is with the Christian life. Each personality is respected, may loved, for what it has to offer to the others. It has been said with perspicacity that the poor do not need the rich so much as the rich need the poor; yet each needs the other. It is not given to man to know God in His fullness, but he can approach that knowledge by loving his brother whom he hath seen.

Singleness of purpose is a bond of the Church and the Church group. In effecting its purpose, the sal-

vation of man, the Church does not demand uniformity. The sects have tried to unite their congregations by demanding uniform confession of faith in particular doctrines. The Church should be united in love.¹⁰ The doctrines of the Church grew out of love of Christ for man, implemented by the guidance of the Holy Ghost. Attempts to make men think alike have always miscarried, for men are individuals who have freedom before God. The Church preserves this freedom and demands that men be united only in love. The unity is important; uniformity is unknown. We need hardly mention again that the group also stands for unity without regimentation. The group process is slow, and also is the progress of the temporal Church, but each is preserving the individuality of its constituents and each is true to its faith in the ultimate triumph of truth.

Participation in the activities and thinking of a group ought to engender in a member the sacredness of human personality and the possibility of bringing together in permanent fellowship an infinite variety of personalities, who are bound by a common vision. This might be the first step in guiding the individual parishioner into an appreciation of the genius of the Catholic Church.

2. In the Church, the community of Christian people, the individual finds his freedom. The same love that binds

¹⁰ I Cor. 12, esp. v. 7-12; 13.

man to God ~~and~~ motivates his love for his fellow men. God's love is the dynamic behind man's love for man. Man's life is impoverished when he tries to live it alone. Private devotion to God is of inestimable significance, but of even greater consequence is worshipping society. The corporateness of Christian worship makes for abundance of life that a man alone cannot have. Man must have another human being upon whom he can bestow love and from whom he can receive love. The second of Our Lord's commandments is like unto the first: "Thou shalt love . . ." Danger arises only when the second commandment is made first, thus in effect denying God's transcendent power to reveal Himself as He will.

The enriching of life by community has been expressed also by an author in a secular field:

No theory or philosophy is valid for directing human destiny that does not include the means and suggestions for maturing personality. Man's salvation at this turning point in his progress is intelligent mass and group action in which wider values and a fully mature outlook upon life are essential.¹¹

We cannot agree with Follett's statement:

Now that we know that there is no such thing as a separate ego, that individuals are created by reciprocal interplay . . .¹²

Our position is that the spiritual welfare of the individual parishioner is enhanced by participation in parish groups, not that such activity is necessary for

¹¹ Slavson, S. R., CREATIVE GROUP EDUCATION, p. 5.

¹² Follett, M. P., op. cit., p. 19.

his salvation. We feel that in the enrichment of his life in the group process, in the give and take thus required, there is a possibility that the individual can begin to realize the values to be derived from a whole community's pressing toward one ideal as over and above individualistic striving for one's self. He can know himself better as he experiences contact with other people. Herein lies his feeling of freedom.

3. The Church looks to ecumenical councils to settle questions of faith. Disputes are settled by the decision of the Church represented in competent delegates and guided by the Holy Spirit. The faith is never decided by one person.

The policy of the group is never rested upon the decision or authority of one person. Of the essence of the group's existence is the responsibility of each member to contribute to whatever undertaking concerns the whole. Sharing in group life can scarcely help but arouse in the individual respect for decisions arrived at by due group deliberation rather than by private effort. Corporately-derived decisions on major issues are of benefit to all; individually-derived decisions are likely to result in the old "rugged individualism," which is spiritual poverty.

4. It is well to mention at this point that both the group and the Church build up traditions that cannot be separated from them. The significance of tradition in

the Church hardly need be mentioned; it is evident to any scholar. The significance of tradition in the group is nearly as far-reaching, although its influence is persuasive rather than authoritative. The point that we are making, though, is that in the group the individual becomes aware of the strength of tradition as well as its value as a brake upon too-rapid change. In the family group the influence of tradition is even stronger than it is in the church group, for the contacts are more intimate and therefore less inclined to be disturbed by extraneous influences. A transition from respect for the traditions of a church group to respect for the traditions of the Church itself should not be difficult to make. For example, group study of worship could start with the virtues of group tradition and then move over into virtues of liturgical worship as it has grown in Church tradition.

Conflicts in group tradition and Church tradition can be reduced to a minimum over a period of years if the rector organizes training classes for his laity and thus effects a nucleus of leaders versed in the traditions of the Church. They should unconsciously, if not consciously, carry this orientation over into the church social groups.

5. As can no other institution, the Church points out limitations in man's intellect to his understanding the world and himself. There are forces operating on him and for him which he cannot appreciate or explain entirely

by the use of his mind. They must be matters of conviction, or of faith; they cannot be put into thought forms.

Here the group can render a real service to the individual. He who is persuaded to enter into the life of a group will find brought home to him that human activity cannot be governed entirely by the operation of the mind but that there are unexplainable forces operating upon human lives. He will see for himself how difficult it is to live up to whatever disciplines of living he might have chosen to impose upon himself when he comes into contact with others, who might have equally commendable individual codes. Groups seem to have a way of accentuating good or evil. The unlawful "gang" and the monastery of devout brothers, each makes up a group, but with what different emphases! If the individual in a group finds it necessary to compromise with a code that he has built for himself, or if, on the other hand, he feels that he is making moral progress in the group, the pastor might find here an opening for instruction on the universality of sin or upon the Source and Sustainer of morals.

6. There is specialization of functions in the group. Each person has something to give to the group that no one else can. Each person must participate actively in the life of the group. A non-functioning member is like a flaw in a piece of machinery -- it disrupts the workings.

In I Corinthians 12, Paul points out that "there are

diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh in all." All are members of the body of Christ. God has not given all men the same abilities, but all are members of His Church. Each man called to the Faith has something to give. The Christian should be humble enough to give what he has and not be jealous of what abilities a fellow Christian has. There is specialization in things of the group as well as in things of the Spirit.

7. Both the Church and the group have continuity of existence. The same offices persist, even though they are filled by different people from age to age. Both the group and the Church develop offices to carry on their traditions and dispatch their business. There is a clear parallel between the continuity of a group that has existed for a considerable period and the continuity of the ministry of the Church.

8. The Malvern Conference report has these suggestions to offer as to ways in which groups can further the cause of the Church and the spiritual welfare of people, both within and without the Faith:

Practical Recommendations

1. (c) . . . let "cells" be formed upon the common basis of common prayer, study, and service. Groups should be formed wherever possible of people not ready as yet to join in Christian devotion, but who come together to study and discuss what is the Christian way of life for them and for society.

2. (b) The Church should strive to keep alive in all men and in all functional groups a sense of

vocation by constantly calling upon them to consider what is the purpose of their various activities, and to keep this true to the purpose of God for His people.

(i) Bearing in mind that education is a lifelong process, we urge that in every parish opportunities be given through discussion groups or tutorial classes for the teaching and practise of religion so that worship may grow in depth and be made relevant to life. This applies especially to parents and teachers, so that they may be more qualified for teaching the Faith in home and school.¹³

¹³ THE MALVERN CONFERENCE REPORT -- OFFICIAL VERSION, pp. 3,4.

Note: To anyone of a philosophic turn of mind who would be interested in tracing down the significance of the number, three, especially because of its importance in Christian doctrine, in the triangle, mother, father, child, in the family, etc., I submit the following interesting definition of the group, taken from S. R. Slavson's book, CHARACTER EDUCATION IN A DEMOCRACY, p. 74:

For our present purpose, a group is conceived as consisting of three or more persons in an informal relation where there is a maximum interpenetration and prolonged direct emotional activity among the individuals constituting it, and as a result of which the personality of each member is modified.

The author goes on to explain that the third person keeps under criticism whatever any of the other two do, with an impartiality they could not maintain without him.

CHAPTER III

Elements of Parochial Group Work

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A. The parochial group must be encouraged to keep its goal (or goals) clearly in sight. It does not matter what caliber of people make up the group if it has no purpose which can be carried out by the mutual effort of all the members. The immediate purpose of the group must be arrived at by the members themselves. The group is not organized for the purpose of reflecting the adviser's or leader's ideas, but its main reason for being is to provide experience in creative living, where each member can contribute to the good of the whole and incidentally contribute to his own welfare. The local group is, to be sure, within a larger group, i.e., the Church, which is determinant of all long-range purposes and policies, but in specific instances it is the group which must decide how it will proceed with the work at hand. The goal has to be achieved by all members working together. The process is of necessity cumbersome. Endless discussion, modification, and change are manifestations of real group activity and thinking. Nothing could be worse to the well-being of the group than to have its immediate goals laid out for it by its adviser and then mechanically followed. Just as

the Church asks that individuals not accept its authority unless it is checked by them against history, reason, and experience, and thus waits indefinitely for unity, so the group on a smaller scale asks for thorough consideration of the matter at hand before it acts. Whether the group can stay together depends upon whether it can thus arrive at its goal by mutual thought by the members. Whatever the group does, it must be its own.

As in determining goals, so in deciding how to achieve them. Once committed to its self-imposed objective, the group must proceed to carry it out for the common good of its membership. No one person's wishes will be allowed to dominate the scene during these discussions, but the desires of all will be given free expression. As a simple illustration, Harrison Elliott relates the case of a group which decides that it is going from New York to San Francisco:

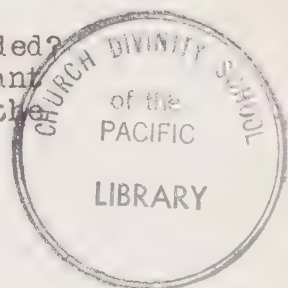
Whether there comes an integration of the desires of all and whether the group can really stay together in whole-hearted fashion depend partly on how far apart they are in particular desires and in their travel standards but more on how important they feel it is to go to San Francisco together. If they really wish to go together, and if they are adaptable persons, they will work away, modifying and adjusting, until they find the option which sacrifices fewest of the travel values and which builds into the trip the most of the desires of all. This will represent some modification but if time is taken a real integration is possible. It is a common goal and mutual respect for the desires of all which make integration take place.¹

¹ Elliott, Harrison S., THE PROCESS OF GROUP THINKING, p. 27.

Group procedure is an adventure in living. The individual learns by participation in life situations undertaken by the group. In the Herbartian system of teaching, the student learned by gaining knowledge which he then applied. The five steps of learning under this system are familiar: preparation, presentation, comparison, generalization, and application. The pupil underwent no experience until the last step in the process. No evidence contrary to the aim of the moment was admitted, except insofar as it, by comparison with the supporting evidence, upheld the specifically applicable information. The whole process was abstract until all the evidence supporting the main proposition had been carefully catalogued in the mind. The group, on the other hand, is always on a quest, and it gains its abstract information as it needs it. Members of a group are not encouraged to prescribe to a particular body of information, but they are encouraged to make their investigations and then match them with whatever other members have to offer. Thus knowledge is gained and maturity is had by mutual interplay of the members of a group. Elliott suggests the following as an outline of typical group thinking:

An Outline of Group Thinking Procedure

- I. The situation and its problem
 1. What is the specific question to be decided?
 2. What factors in the situation are important and must be taken into consideration in the decision? Why?
- II. What to do
 1. Examination of possibilities



- a. To meet the situation and problems as outlined; what are the possible courses of action and the reason for each?
- b. What bonds seem to unite the group and on what is there agreement as to fact and opinion?
- c. What are the chief differences:
 - (1) On matters of fact (as to what is true)?
 - (2) On matters of opinion or point of view (as to what is desirable)?
2. Exploration of differences of fact and discussion of differences of point of view:
 - a. What are the data on differences as to facts?
 - b. What can be said on differences as to point of view?
3. Reaching a conclusion:

What decision can be reached which will meet the situation with its relevant factors and what facts and opinions are the reasons for this decision?

III. How to do it (ways and means)

What are the ways and means for putting the decision into effect?²

In spite of its over-simplification at some points, this outline lays out graphically the experience-centered procedure of any group, such as we have described above. Notice that in the procedure the group itself arrives at the specific question to be decided. This is not determined for it. The goal thus having become the group's own, the members proceed to examine the possibilities, gathering information as they go, and then to reach a conclusion of their own, from which they pass on to a course of action. The whole process is theirs; it is not imposed from without, and it is not separate from their experience. The practical

² Ibid., p. 35.

application of their knowledge is made where it is logically needed, and it is not reserved until every one is absolutely sure that he is without error. If the group principle results in impetuosity (and I doubt that), then the Herbartian system results in over-caution. As far as the spiritual welfare of the individual is concerned, it would seem that he could benefit more by experience than by wondering whether he had enough information at his disposal adequately to back up unforeseen difficulties. "Take no thought for the morrow" is not entirely out of place here.

B. Groups find it necessary to have leaders. All of a group's members will not be thoroughly acquainted with group procedure; they will need some guidance during the sessions. All of the members will not be strictly mutual in their approach; the group will need organizational discipline. Arguments will need summaries; courses of action will have to be planned by sub-groups. For a great variety of reasons, groups need leaders. Ideally, a group will select its own leader. In other cases (Church school classes, for example), the rector will assign someone to supervise the group, either indefinitely or until the group is in a position to select a leader from within its ranks. What are some of the things that a group leader should take into consideration?

First, he respects the self-reliance of his group. No matter how well he is versed in the subject matter at hand, he allows the group to form its own plan of action

as far as he reasonably can. The leader can suggest certain courses of action, or he can be called upon for factual material, but under no circumstances does he try to impose his ideas upon the group as a whole. It is up to the group to decide what it is working toward and to lay out a plan of action. Rob a group of these functions, and you rob it of the essence of its being. The group is not organized to be indoctrinated with information and forms of discipline; group life is creative living. The group learns as it does, and imposition of outside authority would negate this basic tenet of all group work. How intent a group is upon its objective decides whether it will live or die, and that devotion cannot be imposed; it must come from the members themselves.

Secondly, the leader must consider that he is dealing with human beings. He is not responsible for non-rational creatures, but he is dealing with men created in the image of God, with unique qualities that can be realized only as they grow at their own rate. One man cannot make another grow by thrusting his spiritual experience upon him, as if it were the experience of truth. Just as the temporal Church can become one only as men will it, so can the group become one only as the members themselves effect the unity. It is just as much incumbent upon the group leader to respect the rights of every member as it is for the others to respect his. When he enters into relationship with a group,

he does so as a friend to every member of the group. Unless he has this spiritual union with the members, he cannot possibly be their group leader.

Dr. Coyle mentions four factors in the relationship between the leader and the group that make for his effective administration: (1) The leader must so commend himself to the group that they will welcome his presence.

"This does not mean that he will seek to build up an intense personal loyalty to himself. He will at times be the object of hostility as well as of affection. He must learn to accept as inevitable the fluctuation of feeling from the group and to build a steady, diffused and cordial relationship out of mutual respect and common interests." (2) To further this end, the leader will cultivate some skills, so that he can contribute something to the life of the group. He will not, of course, attempt to occupy the center of the stage, but will give freely of his talents for the welfare of the group and its members. (3) The leader is the representative of "certain social values." It is assumed that groups will conform to accepted patterns of social behavior. The leader represents these standards to his group. He does not gain the group's respect by becoming neutral or by withdrawing from this responsibility, ". . . but by so representing those values that they appear inherently attractive." (4) The leader will have to maintain his own integrity. "He will avoid any element of manipulation in

his relation to the group." In some educational groups, the function of the leader will have to be that of "benevolent manipulation," and there are times when he will operate on premises which he cannot for the moment share with an immature group, but these are extraordinary situations.

In the relationship of the leader to his group, therefore, the editor would propose to the reader that he ask the following questions:

1. Does the leader establish and maintain an effective relationship with his group?
2. What positive contribution does he make to its activities?
3. Does he adequately and convincingly represent significant and constructive values?
4. Does he preserve a sincere relation to his group?³

As far as the relationship of a rector to his parishioners in group activity is concerned, the latter two items are the most pertinent. More than anyone else in the parish, the rector must represent constructive values. He has a difficult mission to perform in any case, and unless he can convincingly represent something that people need, his burden is redoubled, if not rendered unbearable. A pastor must know what his church represents. He must know his way around in the environment of the church. He must know ecclesiastical affairs so intimately that he can make laymen comfortable when they come for the ministrations of the Church. A priest who fumbles too frequently in the performance of his legitimate duties commends himself to

³ Coyle, Grace L., STUDIES IN GROUP BEHAVIOR, pp. 2-4. The five case studies in this book are helpful. Cf. McCaskill, Joseph C., THEORY AND PRACTICE OF GROUP WORK, pp. 117-124.

no one as the defender of the Faith.

Many times, too, the pastor must satisfy himself with knowing that he is exerting influence, even though there is no tangible evidence of his doing so. He is an outstanding character in the community, and, unknown to him, he is influencing other people for good or for evil. In addition to knowing what to do within the walls of the Church, he must have so consecrated a life that he will be unconsciously a missionary, no matter where he finds himself. The importance of this aspect of his ministry can scarcely be too strongly emphasized when it comes to relating it to parish group work. The influence of the pastor on his groups will be exerted far more through the total impact of his personality than through any technical training and aplomb that he might have.

Secondly, the pastor is leading his people in devotion to Jesus Christ. He must be very careful not to impose his particular interpretation of Christian living on his people. His job is to make clear certain basic principles that have to be given application through the individual conscience. If he tries to prescribe every detail of another's conduct both in and out of the walls of the Church, he is making a Pharisaic presumption that immediately bespeaks his own pride. The relationship of the pastor to his parish groups must be no less sincere than it is to individual parishioners. The groups are organized to give their members experiences in

Christian living. They learn as they experience. They do not learn by having a particular system of conduct imposed upon them. Indirection stands condemned as a regular pastoral practise to get things accomplished, for it immediately disturbs, and might even disrupt for good, the feeling of mutual trust and confidence which pervades the group. In a chapter on "How do Leaders Influence Others?" Ordway Tead has this to say of the power of genuine devotion manifested by the leader toward his group:

The affectionate devotion of the leader to the led is always a powerful dynamic force. . . . a display of affection in its deepest meaning brings a strong response of personal devotion. "I would do anything for him"--is the attitude induced where the leader has impressed his followers with the strength of his loyalty to them. Without question some of the strongest instances of successful leading center around this influence.⁴

Lest, though, the above passage seem to give the leader with an appealing personality too much confidence in his forte, Tead goes on to state:

Consideration of what is perhaps the most efficient method of influencing others in groups has been left to the last. This is the method of helping to create in and around the group of followers a definite set of conditions and circumstances which the followers feel as a problem or difficulty. . . . Here the leader's effort is to have the difficulties themselves prod the followers to explore and adopt a new line of action which will lead to a change of sentiment and purpose in the direction the leader wants to go.⁵

"In the direction the leader wants to go" is a dangerous

⁴ Tead, Ordway, THE ART OF LEADERSHIP, p.43.

⁵ Ibid., p. 44.

phrase to the welfare of group work, but it is not to be anathematized completely, for, in the Church, the leader will have to watch that group activity does not become too humanitarian. The Church group finds its dynamic in God, not in any scheme of self-aggrandizement. The purpose of the parish group is to aid in bringing the individual into accord with the will of God. The pastor will have to take it upon himself to see that this end is accomplished.

Third, the pastor as adviser usually stays in the background, to step in when called upon for council and information. That the groups may be self-reliant, he does not exercise direct supervision of the details of their programs, but he, as pastor, is duty bound to practise general oversight over his people. To the end that parish groups maintain their churchly orientation, and that their chosen leaders be technically qualified, he provides opportunities for leadership training. Any of a great variety of methods are available, to be applied to his needs and situation. Forrest L. Knapp suggests the following agencies for training of group leaders:

1. Apprenticeship (Cf. Swift's plan, p.64).
2. Workers' conferences.
3. Church library.
4. Reading courses.
5. Correspondence.
6. Institutes and conventions.

7. Schools and classes in local churches and communities.
8. Summer camps and schools.
9. Supervision.⁶

Ordway Tead advises further "systematic personal conferences of trainer and leader."⁷ Here, the rector (i.e., the trainer) must be careful not to impose his ideas upon the group leader. He should confine himself to objective presentation of pertinent information and to assuring that the policy of the group does not contravene the fundamental tenets of the Faith.

Arthur Swift of the Union Theological Seminary suggests that leaders for groups might be trained by the following general steps:

1. Arrangements can be made for learners to do part-time work with skilled group leaders. The skilled must be receptive to the presence of the novice, or the friction between the two will be felt by the group involved.

2. The novices in the part-time field work will be given lectures that parallel their experiences. So that problems can be brought out for discussion, the classes will be broken up into small groups, and each member will be allowed to present his peculiar problem.

3. As the learner gains in knowledge and experience, he will be given more and more responsibility, while a supervisor helpfully but unobtrusively participates in the

⁶ Knapp, Forrest L., LEADERSHIP EDUCATION IN THE CHURCH, pp. 117-130.

⁷ Tead, Ordway, Op. Cit., p. 289

group, watching the interaction between members and between the group and its new leader, later pointing out faults to the leader.

4. The leader should become proficient in some skills that will command the confidence of the group. These can be both vocational and avocational.⁸

A rector might well keep this outline in mind, both for his own supervision of parish groups and for the training of lay leaders.

Tead suggests that group leaders need training in the following fields:

1. Training in psychology.
2. Training in self-knowledge.
3. Training in attitudes.
4. Training to help make group objectives attractive.
5. Training in personality cultivation.⁹

To which we add, training in the teachings and practices of the Church.

We have discussed the thought processes of groups, the relationship of the leader to the group, and the leadership training necessary to maintain essential group procedure.¹⁰ We have yet to consider one other aspect of group work in the parish, i.e. counselling through the group conference.

⁸ Swift, Arthur L., "The Essentials of Training for Group Leadership," NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF SOCIAL WORK, 1935, pp. 364 ff.

⁹ Tead, Ordway, Op. Cit., pp. 276-288.

¹⁰ Cf. Slavson, S. R., CREATIVE GROUP EDUCATION, pp. 204 ff.

C. There are two general methods of counselling through group procedure:

1. The group itself is the counsellor. In the contacts of the group, the individual in distress finds help, which springs from the unity of the group. The members of the group have similar experiences and use the same terminology. There is strength in these corporate aspects of group life. Each individual has a responsibility to the group; he must help sustain it. The leader should see that each member is in a position that best suits his abilities, so that he will have a sense of belonging, of being wanted. If the group procedure is closely enough geared to life itself, the individual, in finding his place in the group, will automatically adjust himself to life outside the group. This method has the advantage of the individual's solving the problem for himself.

2. Small groups can meet informally to chat with the rector. This type of group counselling is particularly helpful to those who are social misfits in the community. The small group is conducive to the opening of hearts and minds. The discussion arising under such intimate conditions will invariably strike home some time during a session.¹¹

¹¹ Cf. Burkhart, Roy A., GUIDING INDIVIDUAL GROWTH, pp. 106-7 and Elliott & Elliott, SOLVING PERSONAL PROBLEMS, pp. 218 ff.

CHAPTER IV

Conclusions

CHAPTER IV

Conclusions

A. Group work is to be taken for what it is worth. We are not holding that it is the only method open to the pastor for the guidance of his people -- far from it. It is a method, though, that commends itself to careful consideration. The constant question of the laity is, "How can I be religious in everyday living? What does worship mean to us on Monday?" Group work, with its providing for actual experience in working out problems under guidance, is a step toward answering.

B. Group work under the roof of the Church is not to be looked upon as a process of self-aggrandizement, but as a means of fostering Christian love for the benefit of individuals in the parish, and for those outside the parish who need a sense of belonging.

It is possible and dangerous for a group to carry to extreme lengths the idea underlying secular group work, i.e., that the group finds its dynamic within itself. This view means loss of a sense of sin and the need for dependence upon something outside of man. On the other hand, group procedure lays the utmost stress upon the worth of the individual and encourages the fullest expression of his

personality. If the latter virtue can be kept before the group and the former fault be reduced to a minimum, the group should have a legitimate and helpful place in the work of the Church and particularly in the work of the parish.

Group procedure runs the additional danger of laying too much responsibility for salvation upon the intellect. Since group interplay commends itself to matching of wits, it is possible that members will come to look upon intellectual power as the highest virtue. Hegelianism emphasizes reason. If, though, the group is looked upon as a place for the expression of the total personality, and if each person is allowed to fulfill best his particular potentialities within the group, the limitations of intellectual prowess should soon become evident. As a corollary to this observation, the group should feel the need of something beyond itself to give it the answer to the life that it is trying to live and understand. Intellectual activity can be the pedagogue to lead members of the group to a realization of the need for the life of grace.

A group is likely to become too activistic for the spiritual welfare of its members. The underlying philosophy of building, breaking down, and then building again lends itself to constant motion without any particular direction. Activism is, though, no bar to a spiritual life. We have said above that eternal policies of the groups in parishes are dictated by the mission of the Catholic Church. It is only in specific applications that the group is to decide

its own objectives, and then only under the guidance of the pastor.

Any group might become smug. Interest in itself might cut it off from the rest of the world, or from the larger group of which it is a part. A group can become extremely self-sufficient. It is the duty of the pastor to keep before his groups that they are not existing for their own edification, but for the general welfare of the Church as a whole.

C. The field of group work is a new one in the social sciences, although some of the underlying principles have been known for some time. Being a newcomer, group work is hampered by lack of sympathy, lack of trained personnel, and lack of funds. More and more young people, though, are becoming interested in its possibilities, and the near future will probably stand witness to its coming of age. The School of Applied Sciences at Western Reserve University is making itself felt throughout the country, and its famous Dr. Grace Coyle is recognized as foremost in the field of group work.

D. The group principle is a valuable working principle. In times past, when the priesthood stood unique as the only association of educated men, it was assumed that the clergy could run their parishes or other charges as they individually saw fit. They were masters in their own confines. Christian education, nurture, has now displaced ecclesiastical authori-

tarianism, and the clergy must have at their disposal means for training laymen who want to know and who want to apply their religion in the temporal world. Group procedure, with its experience-centered education for all ages, is an effective method for serving this end.

E. The group never exists merely to get a certain quantity of work done. It is not a machine. It is an association of human beings. In the mutuality in the group, the individual experiences a principle of living that is probably far removed from that which has been the source of so much spiritual distress to him. He finds that what he experiences and learns in the group can be applied to the routine of living everywhere and to his worship in the church. Many of the principles underlying group procedure closely parallel those that have been utilized by the Church for centuries. In the corporateness of both institutions, he comes to know himself, because he loses himself. The church group is not an isolated club. It is part of a worshipping group. Active participation in the local group is a step toward appreciation of the next larger, and so on up to an appreciation for the Church itself and for all that it represents. In this growing appreciation of the Church through the group, the spiritual welfare of the individual parishioner is enhanced. He is ever becoming more profoundly appreciative of a worshipping society of men, united in Christ and thus heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven.

APPENDIX I

CREDO

(in part)

By

Joseph F. Fletcher

CREDO

By

Joseph F. Fletcher

In a survey course in problems of sociology I was compelled to leave aside all pre-fabricated definitions of the term "democracy" and formulate one of my own. Here it is:

"Democracy is any form of social order in which personal integrity is balanced with collective security; economically, it is an order in which the people determine their own standard of living; politically, it is an order in which each has an equal chance to share in making the rules."

My purpose here is primarily to put my own house of ideas in order. There comes a time, apparently, in the life and work of every teacher when he should stop to marshal his knowledge and conclusions into some more or less coherent pattern. Perhaps this is particularly necessary for those of us who have specialized in the social sciences during these recent years of speedy and rapid social change and stress and strain.

For political and philosophical reasons I have been committed all along to faith in the democratic way. Now I'm going to pause from the business of retailing facts, trends, and interpretations long enough to see just where I stand personally. Doctrinaire conceptions and sectarian terms, incidentally, have no part in this exercise.

Suppose I simply elaborate my definition. After all, I chose the words that make it up as carefully and advisedly as I could. The whole thing, in a way, consists of key-words from beginning to end. The whole thing also seems to fall into three parts.

The first part of the definition deals with the moral or spiritual aspect of democracy; the second part with its economic aspect; the third with the political. We'll take them up in that order, explicating each term in each section.

The Moral Aspect

First, let's take the word "DEMOCRACY" itself. Literally it means rule by the people. Actually it has never been that in practice except in small-scale local units or political subdivisions. We can hardly hope to recover the primary group relations of town-meetings in old New England or the Greek city states. Urbanism in local society and federalism in national life are here to stay for a long time yet to come. With enough social control and planning authority it should be possible to decentralize much of our present congestion to good effect, but the future is largely one of secondary associations and therefore of representative government. Put bluntly, democracy in practice is delegated rather than direct.

Let me say that I believe thoroughly in proportional representation and the principles of referendum and recall (which need much greater development in America). I also believe firmly in the universal franchise without any qualification of property, class, creed, color, or sex. There are many other points which might be mentioned here; for example, that the "checks and balances" idea of republican government devised by the Founding Fathers permits the judiciary to repudiate the decisions of the people's representatives and is therefore anti-democratic. Indeed, most of those silk-stocking worthies sought deliberately to eliminate the possibility of what Elbridge Gerry of Massachusetts called "an excess of democracy." True democracy will subordinate the Executive Branch to the Legislative and confine the Judicial to the function of interpreting the law.

But the main point here is that Democracy is to be understood as representative. Social collectivism enforces centralized democracy. The people's problem is to keep and utilize the power of election and recall

Why do I use the phrase "ANY FORM" in my definition? Can I not be a little more exact and specific? Yes, of course. But there is no need to be more concrete for the purpose of definition. Democracy, in essence, is not a system of government or of social organization; it is a set of dynamic principles. They might be incorporated in a Republican society or a Soviet society, or even in a limited monarchy, if the king were servant of the people and not arbiter. I say "any form" because the validity of democratic principles does not depend upon any given social structure, although the variety of possible forms is limited at least to the exclusion of social orders which are by nature a contradiction of the principle of people's rule (like autocracy, oligarchy, plutocracy.).

Aristotle's classification of social orders is still good enough for our purpose. First, there can be monarchy, which may degenerate into autocracy. It always has so degenerated; it always will. Second, there can be aristocracy, which may degenerate into oligarchy. It always has so degenerated; it always will. Third, there can be democracy, which may degenerate into "timocracy" or plutocracy. There are those, like the proto-fascists springing up on all sides today (read Lawrence Dennis), who say that democracy in its turn has become mere rule by wealth, as Aristotle warned. It isn't true. The exposure of plutocracy in the liberal capitalist social order is no exposure of democracy, for the capitalist order is not a democratic order. On this point we shall have more to say later.

I use the word "ORDER" too, not "system" or "structure." Social organization aims at order primarily; any system or structure it employs is only a means to the end of order. Calling a structure a "system" does not guarantee, anyway, that it will be systematic or orderly. We often speak of the "capitalist system," when, in fact, its chief and most troublesome characteristic is a recurring cycle of breakdown and recovery which is completely subversive of order and stability. Indeed, capitalism (except in its final monopoly state) is the sworn enemy of all planning and rational control of enterprise, and these things are the very core of system and order. I choose the word "order," then, advisedly. Democracy should seek for organization which is both rational and stable. Otherwise "order" becomes disorder.

And now for the phrase "PERSONAL INTEGRITY." A volume could be written about it and should be written. My own philosophy of the individual in relation to society is definitely Personalist, as distinct from (and opposed to) Individualist or Collectivist. I have never had anything but contempt for the atomic and anarchic liberal individualism of the dying world order. Neither do I have anything but disgust for radical collectivism with its mass-man and totalitarian order. The depersonalization of man is certain to follow in any order which subordinates people to an institution of total authority, whether it be the state, the Race, the Church, or the garrison. Institutions are means to personal ends, not ends in themselves.

But we cannot under-rate the difficulties here. Many factors of modern civilization, but pre-eminently technology in industry, transport, and communication, have fixed the inevitability of collective interest and living. Collectivism in our social institutions and structure is inevitable. Under these conditions it will not be a simple matter to preserve personal values and individuality. The old

individualism is a corpse, and we're well rid of it. If a few wish-thinkers still imagine it exists as an alternative for the future, then let the dead bury the dead. No; our problem is not to steer a middle course between the old individualism and the new collectivism. Our problem is to qualify collectivism and try to avoid the danger of regimentation. Somehow, in terms of folkways, mores, and institutional patterns, we shall have to prevent the mass-man from arising and the Man from dying.

Every science of human nature reveals that man is naturally an associate rather than an isolate. Hence, the falsehood at the heart of individualism from the start. Nevertheless, the social order of the future, the collectivist society, will have to accredit the individual personality as a value in itself. Every man must have his INTEGRITY, so that he is integrated with his fellow members in an organic society, but never swallowed up in it. Man is an associate, not an isolate. But also, man shall be a true associate, not an agglomerate! He shall be an integral part of his society, but society shall respect his integrity. Denial of his integrity is the demonic pretension, the lie behind all totalitarian collectivism.

Ponder the word "BALANCED." I use it to describe a democratic society's acceptance of both personal integrity and collective security. The tension between these two can never find a fixed and certain equation. This is a tension which by its very nature will force us into a constant juggling act. We shall have to shift our balance with every change in the weights, with the heavy-growing side on the collective end most of the time. Indeed, the prospect of constant vigilance for personal integrity and against collective forces is already driving quietists to the Florida Everglades, or into nostalgic and wish-thinking philosophies like Distributism and the Southern Agrarian phantasy of 40 acres and a mule for everybody. The fear of bureaucracy, which is a sensible fear, is responsible for a lot of the nonsense talked and written about "regimentation." But the danger can be overcome only by facing it; not by running away from it into reactionary schemes of domestic manufacture and small peasant proprietorship.

I underline the word "balanced" here, however, simply to emphasize the easily-forgotten fact that history doesn't stand still for any generation or for any social structure. A society which treats its problems as if they could be settled at all times within a framework of institutional rigidities is a doomed society. It will probably even die before its time (which is precisely what has happened to liberal capitalism). A healthy and vital social order, such as we might wish our future democracy to be, shall have to be mature and inventive enough to balance itself in shift after

shift of its patterns and institutions. Social order, in brief, is a process of growth and change. And true statesmanship is always more sensitive to social dynamics than to institutional interests. We cannot afford leaders who fail to be "radical" enough.

The final phrase in this first part of our definition is "COLLECTIVE SECURITY." There is no need to elaborate it at great length. Its meaning will be clear enough. Interdependence is so settled a condition now that there can be no security of social rights for any, if they do not exist for all. When St. Paul said, "We are members one of another," he was expressing a pious ideal. It's a fact now which many of his fellow-confessors hate like poison. The Founding Fathers were little more than rhetorical with their slogan "United we stand, divided we fall." But the sociologist in our day uses it to describe the actual scene!

APPENDIX II

Integration of Case Work with Group Work

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There are certain problems besetting the integration of group work with case work, because of human failings. On the face of the proposition of referral by one agency to another, it seems quite simple. If the individual in a group needs the concentrated attention of a case worker, just send him to an agency that specializes in case work, and, if the case-worked person would profit by group experience, reverse the process. But the integration is not so simple. Case work agencies set up certain requirements for entrance of clients into their folds, and the group worker, dealing often with people who do not need the public services of social agencies, will find their referral blocked by the intake policy of the case workers. Likewise, it is difficult for case workers to find a group work agency whose pattern of group organization will admit of the entrance of some cases handled by the former. In the third place, there is the very practical limitation of their not being an agency representing one or the other practise in the community. The growth of specialization in all branches of social work has accentuated the problem. In the early days, the case worker was often a settlement worker, and he was in contact

with the recreational agencies in the community. He was in intimate contact with the group work agency and its leadership, and he thus knew what resources were available to aid those who needed activity within a group rather than concentrated case attention. Pressure to develop specialists has separated group worker and case worker, so that one does not have sufficient working knowledge of the virtues of the other's system to refer cases to the other. Such has been a hampering condition until very recently. Realization of the need for integration in all phases of social work has led practically to such organizations as community chests, ~~or~~ community social directories, where the work of all the agencies in a given area is integrated, and, on the academic side, to the educating of students of sociology to the appreciation of many fields of social work outside the special interest which each might have. Turning to Gertrude Wilson's book, we read:

Implicit in this whole discourse has been the need of workers to know more than their own field of specialty. What are the implications of cooperative service to the training programs of group workers and case workers? We have made it quite clear that the quality of the relationship established between workers and members or clients makes it unwise for one worker to function in the two areas. Therefore, it is apparent that group workers do not need to learn to be practicing case workers or vice versa. We have, however, equally stressed the importance of each worker's understanding the individual and his social setting which is generic to both fields. This examination of their methods of work would lead us to believe that the training for the two specialties is not unlike, but that the difference lies in the emphasis in field work and in courses directly related to practice. Both groups of workers need courses that will give them a basic background, including: (1) understanding of society and the

social processes operating to create different cultures and organizations of social relationships, and to produce different economic and political systems and different ideologies of religious and secular thought; (2) understanding within these systems of the basic organization and development of public and private social work; (3) understanding of human behavior; (4) the use of these understandings in working with individuals in face to face and group relationships.¹

The same author outlines factors to be taken into consideration in making referrals:

In referral situations there are at least three factors operating which should be taken into consideration in determining practices: (1) the kinds of agencies or groups available in the community; (2) the functions of the agencies, especially as defined in (a) intake policies and types of group organizations, (b) case or group loads, and (c) the quality of the professional training of the worker; and (3) needs of the client or member in relationship to his particular life pattern.²

¹ Wilson, Gertrude, GROUP WORK AND CASE WORK, p. 101.

² Ibid., p. 100

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